

Transition to High School for ASD

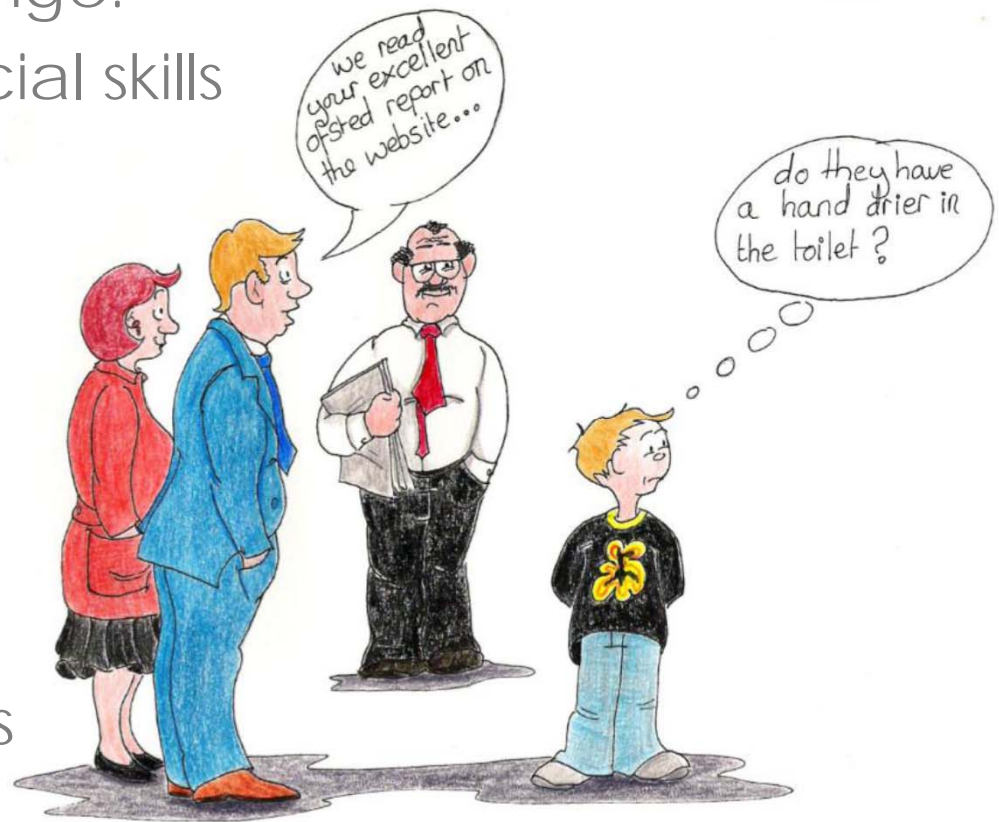
Sydney Region
Autism Conference Day
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Presented by: Angela Sutton, RLaST

Objectives

- Knowledge of transition for students with ASD
- Identify and address considerations for the primary and high school
 - Expectations, preparation and support
- Knowledge of successful transition strategies.
 - Current transition program at Blakehurst HS

Characteristics of ASD

- These characteristics may impact their transition:
 - Difficulty with change!
 - Understanding social skills
 - Organisation
 - Single focused
 - Special interest
 - Anxiety
 - Perfection
 - Literal thinking
 - Sensory sensitivities



Schools

- What should the school expect?
- What do we need to do to prepare the student?
- How can we support the student?

Expectations

Primary Schools

- Expect students to:
 - Be anxious – behavioural, emotional, social changes
 - Lack awareness of the time span
 - Be resistant to change
- Expect parents to:
 - Be anxious
 - Need assistance and information
 - Make additional demands
- Expect teachers to:
 - Feel overwhelmed
 - Need time to meet with the high school
 - Share successful adjustments
 - Implement transition activities and strategies

Secondary Schools

- Expect students to:
 - Be anxious
 - Be resistant to change
 - Be uncertain
 - Need day-to-day assistance
- Expect parents to:
 - Be anxious
 - Need assistance and information
 - Make additional demands
- Expect staff to:
 - Be anxious about meeting student's needs, safety and welfare and/or inclusion of student with ASD.
 - Need time to meet with primary school teachers and students

Primary and High School Preparations

- Identify staff involved in transition process. Arrange key stakeholders to meet.
 - Involve parents to find out their needs and expectations. Organise travel training and visits.
 - Develop Transition Plan. Consider the who, when, where, what, and how.
 - Primary school to provide successful adjustments and strategies to the high school.

Transition plan

Student name: _____ DOB: _____ Parent(s) name: _____

Current setting: _____ Principal: _____ Teacher: _____

Phone: _____

Other personnel: _____

Receiving setting: _____ Principal: _____ Teacher: _____

Phone: _____

Other personnel: _____

Address(es): _____

Time frame and dates	Support during and post transition who is responsible	Accommodations and equipment

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Transition Plan Considerations

- Find out the student's needs and strengths. Plan and implement activities that address the student's needs.
- Allow students to visit the high school during the school day. Prepare staff or mentor students to provide tours or have shadows.
- Prepare students for changing classes and teachers. Plan days at primary school where they move teachers each 'period.'
- Teach organisational skills, like note-taking, using a diary and a timetable.
- Show Year 6 students work that expected in Year 7.
- Obtain orientation material from the high school.
- Organise guest speakers from the high school to visit the primary school.

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Transition Plan Considerations

- Students may need to develop skills in:
 - Asking for help – who, where to go for help
 - Understanding different subjects and what they involve
 - Studying, planning, completing and presenting homework
 - Note taking and extracting meaning from text
 - Navigating through the school
 - Packing their bag for the different days
 - Social interactions – working with others, making and keeping friends, dealing with bullying, where to go on the playground
 - Understanding school rules and behaviours
- Travel training

Primary School

- Organise farewell event(s). Celebrate the completion and graduation. Make it a positive farewell.
- Implement transition strategies (discussed later).

High School

- Organise welcome event(s) and orientation.
- Train staff on working with individuals with ASD.
 - Positive Partnerships
 - Autism Online
- Continue adjustments and strategies that the primary school had in place.

High School Transition Program

- Blakehurst High School – Judy Smith, Welfare Coordinator

Transition Strategies

- Students with ASD need time to process information.
- Priming Strategies
 - Priming is a procedure that allows individuals to preview an activity or event before it occurs so that it becomes more predictable.
 - Priming is effective in helping individuals with ASD during times of transition.
 - Prior to transitioning to a new location, it is helpful to prepare the individual for what they can expect.
 - Several research-based strategies used to prime an individual before a transition will be addressed.
- Teach about change. Change is okay.

Transition Strategies

- Visual Strategies
 - Individuals with ASD demonstrate strength in visual learning. With visual supports, individuals with ASD:
 - Complete more tasks independently
 - Learn quickly
 - Express lower levels of frustration, anxiety, and aggression related to task completion
 - Adjust more readily to changes in their environments

According to Wendy...

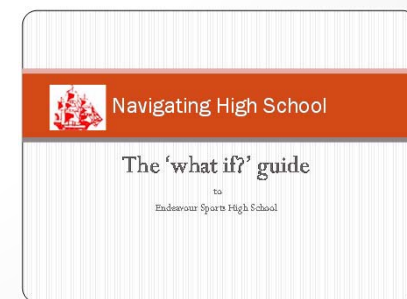
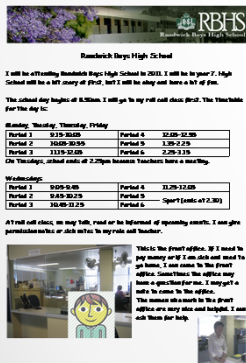
- “Taking words literally and thinking in pictures is what I do naturally. Knowing this can be used as a tool to aid my learning. For example, if you want me to understand a topic, theme or remark... then I need you to 'put me in the picture' or 'paint a picture of it for me'. This means using words to give me the mental images that build a picture of what it is you are saying. If I don't have a picture for it, then I can't think it.”
- <http://www.mugsy.org/wendy/asschool.htm>
(9Aug2012)

Transition Strategies

- Priming through Video
 - If watching videos is a preferred activity for an individual, video priming may be an effective strategy in preparing for a transition.
 - Go through the High School with a video camera. Walk through the steps that will be required (e.g., where to enter, where to play, classrooms, lockers, canteen) while taping and provide a simple narration about the process and requirements.
 - View the movie with the individual several times over several days prior to the transition.
 - [Sample video.](#)
 - <http://www.schools.nsw.edu.au/gotoschool/highschool/index.php>

Transition Strategies

- Priming through Print
 - Individuals may also be prepared for transitions through the use of written stories.
- Social stories:
 - Present information and situations in a visual format that may increase understanding for individuals with ASD.
 - Are a method for explaining what is happening and what is expected across different settings.
 - Sample Social Story



Transition Strategies

- Have the student attend the high school several times at the end of the year 6.
- Make a collage of pictures and names that the student will encounter.
- Discuss rules, games and behaviour expected at the school. Be explicit.
- Show the student where to go to be safe/calm.
- Teach the student how to use a timetable. Colour-code timetable.
- Map the school and tour the school so the student is familiar with the grounds.

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Transition Strategies

- Introduce a high school diary and have the student practice using it.
- Arrange and maintain a buddy or mentor system for the student.
- Travel training.
- Teach student how to use a locker.
- Teach student's about break times: where to go, where to sit, lunch clubs, where to go for help.
- Have the student write a letter to the high school about themselves.

Transition Summary

- 1. Access information – who, what, when, where, how.
- 2. Develop Transition Plan
- 3. Create supports (visual, text)
- 4. Put the Transition Plan into practice.
- 5. Review

Questions or Comments



Resources for Transition

- The Essential Guide to Successful Secondary School by Anna Tullemans and Sue Larkey
- Transition to High School – Including Strategies for Vulnerable Students
 - <http://www.family-advocacy.com/help/Transition%20to%20High%20School%20including%20strategies%20for%20vulnerable%20students.pdf>
- Positive Partnerships
 - <http://www.autismtraining.com.au/>
- NSW DEC
 - <http://www.schools.nsw.edu.au/gotoschool/highschool/transitions/index.php>
 - <http://www.schools.nsw.edu.au/gotoschool/highschool/index.php>